

Segment 6 – Collecting and Analyzing Data

At the beginning of the segment, Bev Showers is briefly interviewed about the purpose of collecting and analyzing student data. The segment continues with a school district representative describing teachers' analysis of student data.

Interviewer:

When analyzing student data to determine goals for student learning how does a district or school set a focus for staff development?

Bev Showers:

Well, the reason we begin on the Iowa Professional Development Model with looking at student data is to determine need, and unfortunately we often discover more than one need when we're looking at student data. We're setting priorities. We're acknowledging that there are not unlimited resources for staff development and we're saying if we identify several needs that students have we're going to focus it on only one in an effort to actually accomplish something, to actually set a goal and meet it. So that's one need for a focus, but other things come into it. Some learning requires greater training than others, and that's a resource issue. So if to implement a new reading curriculum is going to require ten days of staff development and a new math curriculum is going to require five days of staff development, that might tilt your decision when you start to settle on a focus. The whole idea of a focus is [to] choose one thing and do it well and actually have student results, so that's the reason for a focus.

School district presenter:

And I'm just going to start popping though these very quickly, because the purpose today is not to have you study our data, but you can see we had a long way to go when we brought out the sub-groups. But you know, we also had some information that was kind of, oh okay, we're doing some great things. When we looked at our data and we pulled out the ELLs, we pulled out our Special Ed students, and we said look we are doing some great things. And it kind of got lost in those 40s. So then we started identifying what are we doing differently in those classrooms, and what are we not doing for example in our special ed classrooms. And we broke it through and we said, Now we're a very wonderfully diverse building. Let's look at our sub-groups, and we started bringing in our kids that were proficient; we started looking at our different racial back grounds; we started looking at who's achieving, who's not. And the big "ah ha" was we have to take it even closer.

And these I didn't bring, but now we no longer just said, With this group of students that we've narrowed down all of the sub-groups, but we put names with every score. We didn't take a one-time one-snapshot look, but we would look at several years in a row, because as we all know one day could be an up or a down. One snapshot could be... but now we have all this data, we can do something with it.

We had also another "ah ha" a and it's, Where do we go next? And what we discovered was when I was teaching reading many years ago, some of the things that I thought were best practice were probably things I just inherited from either my own experiences or other classrooms I had seen. They weren't necessarily best practice.

Video Transcript Edit

The Iowa Professional Development Model

And that's where we really needed to start. We still didn't have a single focus for our building but we did have that starting point.

But how many of our buildings were like this? We had so many different initiatives. We had so many different individual classrooms. All of them were going somewhere. But sometimes we didn't know the direction it was going, or sometimes we thought it was going one direction. It worked for a short time; it was kind of that honeymoon period, and then it looped off in another direction. It was at that point that we discovered for ourselves that we really did want to be a single focus. We wanted it to be our primary question as we did everything.

How do you get the message? And what do you do? And how does it become a single focus? At every single one of our faculty meetings, there is going to be time dedicated to student achievement. And that time is going to be maybe not long, maybe a twenty minute segment, but we're not using faculty meetings as just a time for announcements or something else that can be sent out by email. But we really did need to have a focus, and it needed to be an ongoing focus and it needed to be something that was expected.